STAGE 2 WORKPLACE PRACTICES – Support Material for Teachers EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Investigation - Issues

**Students undertake an investigation of a local, national, and/or global issue, culture, or environment relating to their experiences of work and workplace contexts, and/or one or more of the Industry and Work Knowledge topics studied. Students gather data and evidence from the industry workplace and the wider community to support their issues investigation, and collate, present, analyse, and evaluate the data.**

Before they begin their issues investigation, students negotiate its form and the conditions under which it is to be undertaken with their teacher.

The issues investigation may be presented in a range of forms, including written, oral, and/or multimodal. It can include documentation such as working drawings, site photographs, sketches, charts, designs, operational procedures, processes, and brochures.

**The issues investigation must be in a format that allows the evidence of learning to be assessed by the teacher and an assessor.**

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* knowledge and understanding
* investigation and analysis
* reflection and evaluation.

Successful Issues Investigations are likely to have the following features:

* identification of a work-related issue that has the scope for students to explore multiple viewpoints
* the title phrased as a question, rather than a topic
* use of both primary and secondary sources of information
* links to students’ personal workplace experiences

**Brainstorming ideas for an issues investigation……..**

These brainstorming points are provided to assist in generating further ideas for an issues investigation. It is **not** provided as a limited list – the only limit to what a student’s issues investigation can be is their imagination!!

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| **RELATED TOPIC** | **ISSUE THAT COULD BE INVESTIGATED (QUESTION or HYPOTHESIS)** |
| Age discrimination in the workplace | * **Is Age Discrimination an issue in today’s ageing society?** * **Should compulsory retirement be encouraged in particular professions?** * **Are young workers disadvantaged due to their age?** * **To what extent can youth wages be seen as Age Discrimination in the workplace?** |
| Alcohol and drugs in the workplace | * **Should alcohol and drug testing be made compulsory across all work environments?** |
| Apprenticeships and Trades | * **Are there enough opportunities for people to gain apprenticeships?** * **What are the benefits and disadvantages of school based apprenticeships?** * **What is the difference between a traineeship and an apprenticeship?** * **Can more young females be encouraged to gain a trade?** |
| Barriers to the careers of women | * **Is the ‘glass ceiling’ still in existence or is it a thing of the past?** * **Can the modern day worker achieve work/life balance?** |
| Benefits and drawbacks of working as an apprentice/trainee | * **Is an apprenticeship worth it?** |
| Bullying at work | * **Is the current legislation combating bullying in the workplace?** |
| Business structures and patterns of business | * **What are the benefits and disadvantages of different types of business ownership structures eg partnerships, sole trader, private and public companies?** |
| Buying and selling a business | * **What are the advantages and disadvantages to selling / buying a business?** |
| Career pathways though a lifetime | * **Will Generation Y be permanent employees or will they be the contract workers** |
| Casual versus permanent employment entitlements | * **Are casual workers disadvantaged compared to permanent employees?** |
| Changes to work hours | * **Do flexible working hours promote a happier and more productive workforce?** |
| Childcare for working parents/caregivers | * **Do employers need to be more flexible with employees who have children?** * **Should employers provide childcare facilities for their employees?** |
| Community enterprise and employment centres | * **Do Job Centres provide a worthwhile service to the unemployed?** |
| Compulsory superannuation | * **Will the compulsory superannuation rate of 9% be sufficient for self-funded retirement?** * **Should providing for your own retirement be compulsory?** |
| Conflict in the Workplace | * **Does conflict in the workplace jeopardize workplace effectiveness?** |

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| **RELATED TOPIC** | **ISSUE THAT COULD BE INVESTIGATED (QUESTION or HYPOTHESIS)** |
| Corporate community service and volunteering in the community | * **How do corporations benefit the community?** * **Do only individuals benefit from Corporate Community Service and Volunteering in the community?** |
| Deciding on a career | * **Does secondary education focus too much on University ATAR scores?** |
| Differences between worker generations (Baby Boomer, Generations X, Y) | * **Do ‘Generation Y’ expect more from employers?** * **Do employers understand ‘Generation Y’?** * **What generational change can be seen in the \_\_\_\_\_\_ industry? How is this effecting growth and productivity?** |
| Discrimination in the workplace | * **Are there enough rehabilitation programs for ex-convicts when they are free from prison?** |
| Diversities in the workplace | * **Are diversities in the workplace celebrated or the cause of workplace division?** |
| Downsizing and layoffs | * **What is the impact of retrenchment on the individual?** * **What workplace conditions can legally lead to “Downsizing” and “Layoffs”, and what rights do workers have in these circumstances?** |
| Enterprise | * **What are the qualities of “enterprising” workers and how can these qualities lead to success in the workplace?** |
| Enterprise bargaining | * **What are the benefits/negatives of enterprise bargaining?** * **What basic rights is a worker entitled to expect from an enterprise bargaining agreement?** * **What personal skills are needed in order to be successful in an enterprise bargaining agreement exercise?** |
| Finding employment for people with disabilities | * **Are there enough employment opportunities for people with a mental disability?** * **Are there enough employment opportunities for people with a physical disability?** * **Given the current economic climate, which trades are best suited to my skills and my chances of future employment success?** |
| Electronic surveillance in the workplace | * **Is electronic surveillance a boost for business or an invasion of workers’ privacy?** |
| Fitness and recreation facilities in the workplace | * **Are there benefits to offering fitness and recreation facilities in the workplace?** * **Should fitness/recreation facilities be compulsory in the workplace?** * **What are the benefits to employers who install and promote fitness and recreation facilities in the workplace?** |

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| **RELATED TOPIC** | **ISSUE THAT COULD BE INVESTIGATED (QUESTION or HYPOTHESIS))** |
| Gender segmentation in the workplace | * **What are the advantages and disadvantages of females working in stereotypical male occupations?** * **What are the advantages and disadvantages of males working in stereotypical female occupations?** |
| Hazards in the workplace | * **Are the current OH&S standards in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ industry up to scratch?** * **What are the most common injuries sustained in the \_\_\_\_ industry? How can workers avoid and prevent these incidents?** |
| How to solve workplace conflicts | * **Are EO laws and government legislation an appropriate solution for solving workplace conflict?** * **In \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ workplace what are the most common causes for conflict and how are they most often resolved?** * **What are the most effective strategies for resolving workplace conflict?** |
| Impact of law on employment | * **Do the possible ramifications from approaching the ‘fair work ombudsman’ outweigh the benefits for a young worker?** |
| Independent contractors | * **Do contractors impact on permanent employment opportunities?** |
| Indigenous employment | * **What has been the impact of removing community work programs from remote indigenous communities?** |
| Industrial relations | * **Is there enough Occupational Health Safety and Welfare training for young people employed in the trades industry?** * **Is racism still an issue in some work industries?** |
| Information and communication technology policy in the workplace | * **Have workplace ICT policies invaded the privacy of workers?** * **To what extent have email and other communication technologies changed the pace of Australian workplaces?** |
| Job sharing | * **Is job sharing a viable work option?** * **What are the advantages and disadvantages of sharing a job with another person?** * **What are the costs and benefits of Job Sharing in the \_\_\_\_\_\_ industry?** |
| Leave entitlements | * **Do the new NES allow for adequate leave entitlements?** |
| Legal services for casual and part-time young employees | * **To what extent are legal services are available to young casual employees?** |
| Life-long educational opportunities | * **Does the Australian post secondary education system encourage life-long learning?** |
| Living independently on minimum wage | * **Does an apprenticeship wage cover living expenses?** |

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| **RELATED TOPIC** | **ISSUE THAT COULD BE INVESTIGATED (QUESTION or HYPOTHESIS)** |
| Managing mental health problems in the workplace | * **What are some common mental health problems and how can they be managed and prevented in the work place?** |
| Men in traditionally female occupations | * **What are the advantages and disadvantages of males working in stereotypical female occupations?** |
| Migrants in the workplace | * **Are migrant workers really ‘taking the jobs’ of Australian’sin the workforce?** |
| Modern Award allowance entitlements | * **Are the Labor Government’s unfair dismissal laws unfair on small business owners, or are they the best thing for vulnerable employees?** |
| Ongoing industrial training and development | * **Should the cost of ongoing training and development be paid by the employer or by the employee?** |
| Overseas employment and/or volunteering |  |
| Overseas entitlements |  |
| Paid parental leave | * **Who benefits most from paid parental leave - the company or the family?** |
| Parenthood and employment | * **Do employers need to be more flexible with employees who have children?** |
| Pregnancy and employment | * **What provisions should/could be made in workplaces to cater for the continuing employment of pregnant women?** |
| Political implications of changing patterns of work |  |
| Redundancy |  |
| Re-entering the workforce | * **How hard is it to get back into the workforce after more than five years away from work?** |
| Rehabilitation post OHS&W incidents | * **What support/rehab processes are in place in different workplaces?** |
| Religion in the workplace | * **Muslim friendly workplaces – how can they be created to promote respect, tolerance and equity?** |
| Rural Vs Urban employment | * **Are there enough part-time work opportunities in rural areas?** |
| Scholarships and grants |  |
| School roles in preparing students for the workforce | * **What are the advantages/disadvantages of VETiS programs?** * **To what extent should schools be responsible for Occupational Health and Safety of students on Work Experience?** |
| Self-employment and home businesses | * **What are the advantages/disadvantages of working from home?** * **What are the advantages of having your own business or being self employed?** |
| Sexual harassment in the workplace | * **Can sexual harassment ever be defended?** |
| Small business |  |

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| **RELATED TOPIC** | **ISSUE THAT COULD BE INVESTIGATED (QUESTION or HYPOTHESIS)** |
| Stress in the workplace | * **How can employees and supervisors prevent and manage stress in the workplace:?** * **Does more stress exist in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ occupation compared to 10 years ago?** * **What are common causes for stress in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ industry and how can they be avoided?** |
| Studying full-time Vs working full-time | * **How do full time students support themselves during their study years?** * **Does full time study lead to a higher income in later years?** |
| Trade unions and trade membership | * **Is trade union membership a thing of the past?** |
| Trial work and other types of unpaid work | * **Are trial work periods legal and fair?** |
| Two-income families Vs one-income families | * **Can a family survive on a single income?** * **What are the advantages of having a stay-at-home mum (or dad)?** |
| Unemployment and long-term effects | * **What are the health/economic/social effects of the long term unemployment?** |
| University study | * **Do University graduates find employment easy when out in the work force?** |
| Valuable workplace attributes | * **What do employers expect/need/want of the modern day employee?** |
| Volunteering overseas |  |
| Wages | * **Are Australians working too much overtime without being compensated?** * **Are apprenticeship wages economically viable?** * **Do police officers get paid enough considering the risks they face?** * **Are pay rates and working conditions the attraction to the retail industry?** |
| Women in traditionally male occupations | * **What are the advantages and disadvantages of females working in stereotypical male occupations?** |
| Work in the local area | * **To what extent are employment opportunities available in the local area?** |
| Work/life balance | * **Is the increasing number of work hours impacting on our growing obesity rate?** * **Do the work hours of a full time hospitality employee affect their family/social lives?** |
| Workers’ Compensation | * **Does working night shifts affect your physical and/or mental health?** |
| Working nightshifts | * **Does shift work impact on the health of workers?** |
| Workplace advocates for pay and conditions |  |
| Workplace violence | * **Is there an increasing trend of violent behavior in the workplace?** * **Is there an increasing trend of violent behavior in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ industry?** |
| Youth employment in rural areas | * **Do young people in my school feel positive about getting a job in this area?** |
| Technology | * **Has digital photography downgraded skills?** * **How has technology impacted on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ industry?** |
| Training | * **Should the workplace pay for training of staff?** |